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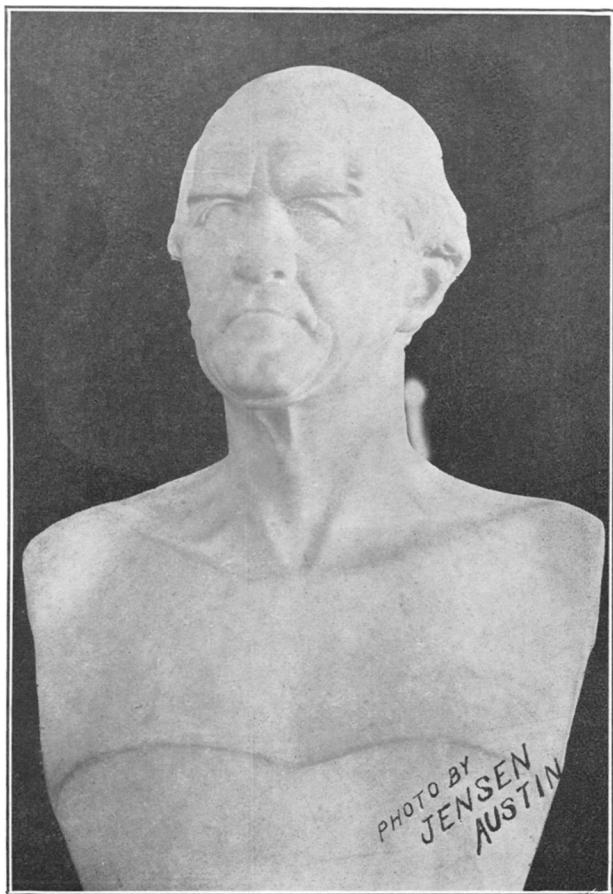
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SAM HOUSTON

(Marble bust by John O'Brien, who was born in Cork about 1826, and died at Galveston in 1903. The bust was acquired by the State in 1891.)

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RECOLLECTIONS OF GENERAL SAM HOUSTON

A. W. TERRELL

General Sam Houston will always be conspicuous in history as one of the most remarkable men of the past generation. Much has been written about him that is misleading. This was natural, for his career was marked by fierce antagonisms, and men generally regarded him either from the standpoint of partiality or prejudice.

I who knew him intimately in his later years now comply with the request of friends in giving my recollections of him, with incidents of his strange career, many of which I had from his own lips in social converse from time to time while he was governor of Texas and I a young district judge, meeting him almost daily in Austin. I know of no other living man who knew him well, and a natural curiosity is felt by this generation to know more of his appearance, his disposition, his habits, incidents illustrating his character, and the peculiarities that distinguished him from other men.

His Early Life.—On the forty-third anniversary of his birth (March 2d, 1836) he signed the Declaration of Texas Independence. When left an orphan at a tender age by his father's death, his mother crossed the mountains from Virginia with him and her other children, and settled in Maryville, Blount county, Tennessee. The family was poor, and after working on a small farm and obtaining such common school education as a new country

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afforded he was placed by his older brother in the store of a Mr. Sheffy to clerk. He was not satisfied there, and went to the tribe of Cherokee Indians, whose lands were just across the Holston River, and but a few miles distant. With them he remained for nearly two years, fishing, hunting, participating in their ball games and other amusements. His adventurous and ardent nature rejoiced in the wild freedom of the forest and in the companionship of the Cherokees, whose language he learned to speak fluently. The Indians made him a sub-chief and named him Co-lon-neh,¹ the raven. He lived in the home of Oo-loo-tee-kah, known by Americans as John Jolly, who became the principal chief of the western fragment of the Cherokees after their removal by treaty west of the Mississippi River. Thus early he heeded the "call of the wild" by disregarding the authority of his older brother, and evinced that impatience of control that marked all his future life.

After leaving the Cherokees he was for a short time a student in the academy at Maryville, until the declaration of war with England, when he enlisted as a private soldier in his twentieth year, and was commissioned as an ensign by President Madison.

His Personal Appearance.—Joseph Guild of Gallatin, Tennessee, states in his *Old Times in Tennessee* that Houston was six feet six inches high. Guild greatly admired Houston and some allowance must be made for his error, for Houston's height in his prime of life was six feet two inches; he once told me so, and though men shrink in stature when old he could never have been so tall as Mr. Guild describes him. I will describe him as I remember him, though it is difficult to write a picture of any one.

His bearing was always dignified and erect; his form indicated great strength and activity; his face and head were large and symmetrical; his voice deep toned, manly and firm; his speech whether in conversation or addressing an audience deliberate and distinct; and his eyes large and deep blue.

He was a little eccentric in his dress, was occasionally seen with a vest made of leopard's skin, and wore in all seasons a soft, broad brimmed, fur hat. In winter he sometimes wore a Mexican

¹The Cherokee word "Co-lon-neh" is properly Ka-la-nu, signifying "raven," a common Cherokee word and hereditary personal name.—F. W. HODGE.

blanket, but in other respects was usually clothed in the fashion of the time. His gestures were graceful and his manners refined, especially when with ladies, with whom he was a great favorite. He was an inveterate whittler, and one of his San Jacinto captains once told me that he always found him whittling when he visited his headquarters. I will be excused for remembering that I often thought of General Houston's appearance during the four years I lived in Europe when I met often in the audience chamber of the Sultan of Turkey and at social functions the ambassadors of other powers, bedecked with the medals and gewgaws of rank. On such occasions I have wished that I could show them Sam Houston, a man commissioned for leadership by God, who needed no artificial decorations, and whose appearance attested his nobility.

A fine marble bust of Houston may be seen in the State Library room in Austin which represents him as he looked in 1859.¹ An excellent portrait of him belonging to the Hon. Edwin B. Parker of Houston shows how he appeared in 1863, and another portrait painted in the Cherokee nation now hangs in my hall, and will be given to Texas. Another portrait made at the same time in the Cherokee nation belongs to the State of Tennessee.² They represent him naked with only a blanket thrown around his waist. He told the artist to paint him as "Marius among the ruins of Carthage," and so he stands among broken columns with but a few remaining standing, as if to indicate that hope was left.

I quite agreed with the Hon. John H. Reagan, Major W. M. Walton, Governor Lubbock and others that the marble statue of Houston in the National capitol, a replica of which is near the south entrance of our State House, does not convey a correct idea of the man. They are the conceptions of a distinguished artist

¹See frontispiece.

²A portrait of Sam Houston very closely resembling the one described in the above paragraph was some years ago offered to the Tennessee Historical Society: the Society did not accept it. Concerning the history of this proffered portrait the secretary of the Society states that it "was painted in or near the city of Nashville, Tenn., by Washington Cooper. . . . I knew the artist well for many years. In speaking of this portrait he said that Governor Houston was very proud of his physical development. 'He came to my studio one day and asked me to paint him as a Roman senator, which I consented to do.'"

The Tennessee Historical Society has two portraits of Governor Houston by Cooper.—THE EDITORS.

who never saw him, and who has represented him clothed with a fringed hunting shirt, cavalry boots and wearing a sabre. The marble bust in the State Library would have given the artist a better idea of his face.

I first saw him in 1855 after he had joined the Native American or Know-Nothing Party, but did not then form his acquaintance. He was mounted on a splendid gray horse and rode at the head of a procession of his admirers on Congress Avenue in Austin, going up to the old Capitol building, from the steps of which he spoke to the multitude. He was a fine horseman, and as with uncovered head he bowed to the people who with shouts were saluting him, I thought I had never seen a more attractive figure. He visited Austin again in 1857, and I then heard him speak in a beautiful grove on the very ground where now stands the State University, just north of which a barbecue was prepared. I did not then know him personally, being opposed to his political course. My acquaintance began in the autumn of 1857 after his defeat for governor under circumstances to which I will refer presently, and which marked the beginning of a mutual friendship.

History tells us of his daring at the battle of the Horseshoe, of his being elected to Congress when on account of his age he was barely eligible, of his re-election, and of his then being elected Governor of Tennessee. Also of his marriage to Miss Eliza Allen (who was a first cousin of Mrs. E. H. Mitchell, my mother-in-law), and of his separation from that wife. Every schoolboy knows of Houston's career in the Texas revolution and of his victory at San Jacinto. That battle he once at my request described to me; and some sidelights upon that victory, thus obtained, will be found in my printed address to the San Jacinto veterans at their annual reunion in Houston in 1893.

The music for the Texan troops at San Jacinto was made by a fife and a kettle drum. The soldiers, remembering the recent massacre of Fannin's men after their surrender, and the butchery at the Alamo, were eager for revenge. Houston knew that their courage had hardened into desperation, and he ordered the musicians to play as the army moved to battle the old love song "Will you come to the bower I have shaded for you," and to change the tune to "Yankee Doodle" when in close rifle range. The Greeks indulged in the pyrrhic dance before battle, but Houston's army

at San Jacinto was the only one that ever charged to the music of a love song, except when General Havelock marched to the relief of Lucknow to the music of "Annie Laurie."

Separated From His First Wife.—Houston's separation from his first wife is a mystery which I presume will never be solved. He and his wife were regarded as the finest looking couple in Tennessee. They were married in January, 1829, he being then governor. His canvass for a second term opened the following April. A few days afterwards he resigned his office and, a few hours later, before the citizens of Nashville knew it, he was going down the river in disguise on a steamboat. When his friends next heard of him he was with the Cherokees west of the Mississippi River. They sent a small stock of goods to him suited to the Cherokee trade, and without his previous knowledge, for they knew his indifference to money. They also sent an artist to paint his portrait.

Henry Sublett, who took my place in the law firm of Hamilton and Terrell in 1857 and whose older brother Phil Sublett had been Houston's friend in boyhood, once told me that he was present when Houston resented the efforts of that brother to discover the cause of his separation from his wife. Phil Sublett lived in eastern Texas and in 1839 Houston often stopped at his house. He was then much given to dissipation and one stormy night rode up to the house out of a cold rain quite intoxicated. After he had thrown himself on the floor, Phil got down by his side and said: "Sam, you know you can trust me. Why did you quit Eliza?" Henry told me that Houston was sober in an instant, and rising up said: "Sir, you violate the laws of hospitality by seeking to tear from my bosom its secret," and mounting his horse he went forth in the stormy night, rejecting all Sublett's efforts to detain him.

The conduct of his divorced wife who afterwards married Dr. Douglas was equally strange. She never mentioned Houston's name, but, without speaking, would resent every harsh reference to him by promptly leaving the presence of the speaker, and she is said to have read with avidity every notice of his subsequent career. What effect the deep grief that drove Houston into exile had in changing his nature can only be surmised; but certain it is that he is the only man I ever knew who having a keen sense of humor never indulged in boisterous laughter. When his anecdotes

or droll sarcasm excited those around him to merriment, he would remain with features unmoved and only show his enjoyment of the pleasantry by opening his large blue eyes as if in astonishment.

Among the Cherokees.—While with the Cherokees he resumed his name of Co-lon-neh, or the raven, and always wore the garb of a Cherokee. His intimate friends were Oo-loo-tee-kah and Apoth-la-a-hoo-lah, neither of whom spoke English. Within a year after separating from his wife he married a beautiful half-breed woman, Tiana Rodgers, who was said by those who had seen her to have been very tall and graceful and devoted to Houston. With her he lived in a log cabin on the banks of the Grand River nearly opposite Ft. Gibson. Judge W. S. Oldham, my first law partner in Texas, and a former supreme judge in Arkansas, had known Houston in Tennessee and sometimes saw him in Ft. Gibson dressed like a Cherokee. He would never then speak English to anyone and a deep melancholy caused him to avoid all intercourse with white men. Such periods would be followed by intoxication, though his former habits in that respect had been exemplary. Often he was seen armed only with the bow and arrows with which he had become dexterous when a boy. He was always a friend of the Indians, and as president and governor did much to preserve peace on the frontier of Texas.

His Method of Campaigning in 1857.—The canvass for governor of Texas in 1857 was marked by great bitterness. Houston had made himself obnoxious by his vote on the compromise slavery measures and was opposing Runnels, who was the Democratic nominee for governor. Wigfall and W. R. Scurry canvassed against him east of the Trinity and Judge W. S. Oldham west of that stream. Though I had never taken an active part in politics, the State convention at Waco made me one of the central executive committee, and afterward I had announced as a candidate for district judge of the five counties embracing the capital. The Hon. John A. Green, son of Chief Justice Nathan Green of Tennessee, was my competitor and he was related either by consanguinity, affinity, or partnership connection with ten other lawyers including a federal judge and John Hancock, a former district judge, all of whom lived in Austin. This alarmed the lawyers who were not in the connection, and they persuaded me to oppose Green. Houston's course in his canvass of the State was defiant; he refused to speak

from the same stand with anyone opposing him. Wigfall he called "Wiggletail," and denounced him everywhere as a murderer. At Tyler he closed his speech by telling his audience that a murderer named "Wiggletail" would follow him, and he advised them not to hear him "unless they were fond of lies." After speaking he sat in the porch of a hotel near the courthouse and when the crowd left at the close of Wigfall's speech, he rose and met them with uplifted hands and shouted, "Did I not tell you that you would hear nothing but lies?"

His Speech at Lockhart.—He spoke at Lockhart one sultry afternoon in 1857 from a long platform erected in a grove near Storey's spring. A large portion of his audience was composed of his San Jacinto soldiers and their kindred. He was clothed in a long coarse linen duster that reached to within a foot of his ankles, loose pants of the same material, no vest, low quartered shoes, and his shirt collar opened until the audience could see the grizzled hair on his breast a foot below his chin, and as thick as a buffalo mop. I had never before heard him speak when thus attired, but his erect bearing, the majesty of his appearance, his deep-toned, commanding voice, impressive gestures, and perfect composure made a lasting impression upon me. That impression was deepened when he denounced the executive committee, of which I was a member.

While Houston was speaking, Judge Oldham rode up. Oldham took from a large pair of saddlebags two volumes of the Congressional Globe. When the audience in front from curiosity began to move, Houston said, "Be still, my friends, be still, I will report the cause of this commotion." Then, taking a step to the rear of the platform and looking over, he turned and said: "It's Oldham, only Oldham, I'll tell you what he is doing." After looking to the rear again he faced the audience and said in a loud voice: "He is opening some books, but they are not the bank books he stole and sunk in White River, Arkansas."

I was standing by Oldham's side. He bit in two the cigar he was smoking and said: "He wants to provoke an attack and have me assassinated." Oldham knew the devotion of Houston's friends and how a personal difficulty would terminate.

Referring again to Oldham, Houston said that his name was attached to a paper issued by the Democratic executive committee

of the State appointed by "some conspirators at Waco" in which it is said they intend "to handle me without gloves." He paused a moment, and took deliberately from the pocket of his duster a pair of heavy buckskin gauntlets and with mock gravity drew them on, saying "that paper is too dirty for me to handle without gloves." Then drawing the paper from his pocket he read that portion which declared that all traitors should be defeated, and in the defeat of Houston "add to theirs a name of fear that traitor knaves shall quake to hear." Throwing the paper to the floor with quick impatient gesture, he exclaimed: "What! I a traitor to Texas! I who in defense of her soil moistened it with my blood?" Then he took several steps, limping on his leg that was wounded at San Jacinto, and continued: "Was it for this that I bared my bosom to the hail of battle at the Horseshoe—to be branded in my old age as a traitor?"

The effect can hardly be described. A wave of sympathy swept over the audience, and red bandana handkerchiefs were wiping tears of indignation from the eyes of his old soldiers. Then he stooped down and after picking up the paper said: "Let me read you the names of that executive committee." He read: "Williamson S. Oldham—though he stole and sunk those bank books in White River and ran away to Texas, he is not yet in the penitentiary."

"J. M. Steiner—a murderer. He murdered Major Arnold."¹

"John Marshall—a vegetarian; he won't eat meat; one drop of his blood would freeze a frog."

"A. W. Terrell—he used to be a Whig in Missouri. They tell me that the young scapegrace wants to be your judge. A pretty looking judge he would make, this slanderer of a man old enough to be his father."

I have heard all the great orators of the Republic and State of Texas, except Lamar and the Whartons. Houston as an orator before a frontier audience excelled them all. His voice was clear as a bugle, and his thorough knowledge of the impulses and habits of thought of the fearless men who made Texas enabled him to exercise a wonderful influence when addressing them. He was one

¹Dr. Steiner was a cultured gentleman who slew in self-defense, and was acquitted by a jury.

of them, and his knowledge of human nature enabled him to impress and move them with consummate skill. Of course, their admiration of the man and his strange career had their influences. He was the product of strange environments which have disappeared in the progress of society, and for that reason we will not see his like again.

The election resulted in the defeat of Houston for governor, and in my election as district judge. After the election I published in the *State Gazette* a note in which I declared that my name had been placed on the address of the committee without consulting me and, while I endorsed all its political reasons for the defeat of General Houston, I would never have signed the address which called him a "traitor knave," for his services to the country as a patriot were known to all men. I sent the article to General Houston in a letter, stating that I had delayed making the correction until I was elected, so my motive could not now be questioned. He answered by saying that in a long and eventful career he had never received anything from a political opponent that pleased him more, and he hoped soon to know me personally. From that time I date a friendship between us that lasted until his death. Two years after that canvass he was elected governor, and then I met him almost daily. He and his amiable wife belonged to the Baptist church, of which Mrs. Terrell was a member, and my wife's last sacrament was taken at our home one hot afternoon two miles south of Austin, as she lay on her cot under a spreading live oak tree, when General Houston and wife and nearly all the members of her church partook with her of the cup.

As a Christian.—I have seen two autograph letters, one from General Jackson and one from Houston in answer thereto. General Jackson wrote to him soon after he joined the Cherokees, expressing his sympathy and astonishment. Jackson had reformed and become a Presbyterian; he advised Houston to become a missionary among the Indians; the latter replied, after expressing his pleasure in knowing that he still had the confidence of his old commander, that to be a missionary to the Indians was an employment "neither suited to his inclinations nor capacity." After Houston's marriage to Miss Margaret Lea in 1840, a lady of strong intellect, a noble wife and mother and devout Christian, she exercised a wonderful influence on his habits of drinking and

using profane language. He was baptized near Brenham, Texas, by the Rev. Rufus Burleson; but long established habit is a terrible tyrant, and the Hon. John H. Reagan has more than once related to me an incident in Houston's life that illustrates this aphorism. He was riding with Houston and a Baptist preacher in eastern Texas when Houston's horse stumbled and threw the General upon his neck. When Houston exclaimed, "God d— a stumbling horse!" the preacher said: "Oh! brother Houston, do you still swear?" "Well, what must I do?" asked the General. "Ask God to forgive you." "I'll do it. Hold my bridle rein," and then he dismounted and walking to a fence near the wayside knelt down under a hot sun and prayed.

Once when he came to church late I saw him take a seat near the door at a place where negro slaves usually sat, and knelt down in prayer by the side of a little negro boy.

Whether he ever felt in full measure the Christian virtue of loving his enemies may well be questioned, for while he no doubt felt a desire for the salvation of their souls after death he was always much given to plain speaking about what scoundrels they were in the flesh. He was continually attacked by ambitious men who exasperated him by assailing him through the press. His very last speech in the United States Senate was made in answer to a bitter attack of a personal enemy who charged him with cowardice at San Jacinto.

Only a few weeks before his death I witnessed a touching evidence of how time and the influence of religion had softened his imperious nature. I met him in Houston near the old Fannin Hotel one summer morning in 1863 and at once disclaimed allusion to him in an address I had made at the Capitol; for it had been charged by an Austin newspaper that I had made a covert attack upon him. His answer was, "I know, Judge, I know you did not refer to me, and if you had it would only have excited regret. I feel that my time is short and I have not a root of bitterness here," touching his bosom with his hand, "towards any human being that breathes."

That night I met him by invitation at the house of Major E. W. Cave, his former secretary of state. After some conversation he asked my opinion about Texas sending all her young men to distant battlefields across the Mississippi River and said: "We

will soon have no one in Texas but old men and boys to defend our homes." The waste of life seemed to him wicked and unnecessary. He asked my opinion as to how our people would feel in Texas about unfurling the Lone Star flag and calling the boys home, saying to the North and South "hands off." I declared my belief that it would cause the sacrifice of any man who proposed it. The subject was then dropped. It was agreed between Major Cave and myself that the conversation should be kept secret for obvious reasons. Six years ago shortly before Major Cave died, he was still averse to making public the conversation for reasons that did not appeal to me. The idea of a separate republic for Texas was naturally dear to General Houston, but he failed to realize that such a move as he proposed during the madness of the hour would be regarded as treachery to the other Southern States, and would be treated as an act of treason.

Caning Stanberry.—The caning of Congressman Stanberry, from Cincinnati, Ohio, and events connected with and following it, constitute a most remarkable chapter in the life of Houston. The difficulty had its remote origin in Houston's activity in trying to check the systematic plunder of the Cherokees by government contractors during the great excitement caused by Jackson's veto of the United States Bank charter. In the fall of 1859 I heard his version of the difficulty and his subsequent trial, which I will now relate. It was a long time ago, but I afterwards made full notes of the conversation, and those who know me will bear witness to the tenacity of my memory.

After General Houston's election as Governor in 1859, he brought his young son Sam to Bastrop, where I was then holding a session of the district court, to place him in the military academy of Colonel Allen. Governor Sayers, now living in Austin, was captain of the cadets when Houston with uncovered head inspected his company during that visit, handling every gun. General Houston for several days lodged at the house of Jimmy Nicholson where Jack Hamilton, John Hancock, George W. Paschal and myself were boarding during court. Houston having just been elected governor was in a cheerful mood, and being in the company of gentlemen, all of whom except myself had canvassed for him, entertained us until midnight with interesting

events of his career. I had not then read the history of his trial contained in the eleventh volume of the *Abridgment of Debates in Congress*, but Hamilton had, and requested the General to tell us of it. The air was balmy and the full moon was shining from a cloudless sky as we sat on Nicholson's porch and listened until late at night. Williams's *Life of Houston* places him in Washington in March, 1832, when Stanberry first made his offensive remark. This is an error. Houston told us that Stanberry went out of his way to assail his conduct, and that a friend sent a newspaper clipping to the Indian nation to inform him. This fact did not appear in the trial, nor did Houston refer to it in his speech, for it was not in the record. He told us that he wrote at once to Stanberry demanding a public retraction of his remarks and sent his letter by a Cherokee Indian to be mailed at Ft. Gibson. After waiting a reasonable time for an answer, he resolved to go to Washington and demand in person a retraction. He borrowed from a Cherokee friend named Apoth-la-a-hoo-lah his fringed buckskin hunting shirt with a beaver skin collar, and armed only with a Bowie knife and hickory cane that General Jackson once gave him, he started for Washington.

There were then no railroads west of the Alleghanies and the journey was tedious. On his arrival in the spring of 1832 he went directly to the hall of the old House of Representatives, for having been a member he had the privilege of the floor. While standing behind the speaker's stand and hidden from view he was conversing with Bailey Peyton, Felix Grundy and James K. Polk, when Stanberry (who perhaps knew of his presence) got the floor and again indulged in an insulting reference to Houston and spoke of him as one of General Jackson's "bullies." The General told us that he could with difficulty restrain himself, but was influenced by his friends to leave the House.¹

He then found his old friend Reverdy Johnson and requested him to bear a note to Stanberry. Fearing that Stanberry would

¹Many years after this conversation Colonel Bailey Peyton, then over eighty years old, was in Austin and confirmed Houston's statement while conversing one night with some friends and myself. He said that Houston remarked when Stanberry made the insulting statement: "I right such wrongs where they are given, were it in the sight of heaven," and his friends had much difficulty in preventing a scene.

refuse to recognize him on the ground that he was a voluntary exile from civilization, Houston made Reverdy Johnson promise that in such an event he would not pursue the course required by the dueling code and assume the quarrel himself. Stanberry having refused to notice Houston's note, except by denying his right to question him, was just at dark crossing Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the National Hotel when he approached where Houston was standing and conversing on the opposite pavement with Senator Buckner of Missouri. Houston said: "Is this Mr. Stanberry?" The answer according to General Houston was the snapping of a flint-lock pistol close to Houston's breast. Before he could draw again Houston had knocked him down with a cane and then wrenched the pistol from his grasp.

The testimony before the congressional committee makes no mention of the snapping of a pistol but does of Houston's wrenching some object from Stanberry's hands. It was dark; percussion caps were not then in use; and the pistol being a flint-lock and making no flash Buckner did not see it. Knowing the calmness of Houston in danger, there can be no question that it occurred as he stated it.

With his foot on Stanberry's prostrate body he was chastizing him with his hickory cane when the police appeared. The General told us that he then drew his knife and told them to stand off, that he was "whipping a scoundrel who had insulted him, but did not intend to kill him."

The journals show that Stanberry, who for some days was confined to his bed, complained to the House in a note published in the debates. A committee was at once named to investigate, evidence was taken, and a long debate followed. He claimed in his defense that he had caned Stanberry for the second offense; namely, for publishing libelous matter in the press, and not on account of the insulting language in debate. The case dragged along for nearly a month, but General Houston told us that his friends had counted noses and knew that no degrading sentence would be pronounced. He had kept away from the White House until a few days before the date when he would be heard in his own defense at the bar of the House, when one night he received a note from President Jackson as follows: "Sam, come to the White House. I want to see you." He told us that, dressed

in his buckskin suit (for he had no money to buy clothes), he obeyed at once the summons and found General Jackson pacing the floor in great excitement. His features portrayed his rage, and with the look of an angry tiger he said: "It's not you they are after, Sam; those thieves, those infernal bank thieves, they wish to injure your old commander."

Never before had he seen Jackson in such a rage, and General Houston told us that he did not believe that anyone could then have looked on his face without a tremor. The President told him that he must prepare for his defense before the House and dress himself like a gentleman, at the same time taking a long silk purse filled with gold pieces from a drawer and tendering it. Houston's pride rebelled, and at first he declined to receive it, saying he had no means of repaying it, but Jackson insisted until he took the purse, for he said: "Sam, you must take this money and when you make your defense tell those infernal bank thieves, who talk about privileges, that when an American citizen is insulted by one of them, he also has some privileges."

The next day Houston ordered a fine suit of clothes, a silk hat, and boots, which were delivered the afternoon before he was to speak. That night he had as his invited guests at his room Stephenson the Speaker of the House of Representatives who was an old friend, Senator Felix Grundy of Tennessee, James K. Polk and Bailey Peyton, and I now quote *verbatim* his language:

"Gentlemen, we sat late and you may guess how we drank when I tell you that Stephenson at midnight was sleeping on a lounge in the room. Bailey Peyton was out of commission and had gone to his room, and Felix Grundy had ceased to be interesting. Polk rarely indulged and left us early. Though I drank deeply I could not feel intoxicated, and ordered a bellboy to wake up a barber and bring him. When he came I told him to bring me a cup of coffee at sunrise and his 'shaving traps.' Opening a drawer, I said, do you see this purse of gold and this pistol? If the coffee does not stick when I drink it, take the pistol and shoot me and the gold is yours." He said that he was at the very bottom round of the ladder and that he had rather have died than to have made a failure in his speech, which would occur if the coffee sickened him. The next morning the coffee agreed with him, and

being dressed for the occasion he appeared at the bar of the House in custody of the sergeant-at-arms at the appointed time.

The excitement in the city was great, and the gallery was packed with the intellect and beauty of Washington. He gave us the outline of his defense substantially as published in the *Abridgment of the Debates*, except for an incident during his speech which was omitted, for what cause one can only surmise; but Col. Bailey Peyton many years afterward assured me that the incident occurred. Houston told us that during the debate the anti-Jackson men had made such a wanton attack on his domestic relations that he was tempted to seek higher game than Stanberry, referring to which he said as it appears in the speech: "I ask no sympathy nor need. The thorns which I have reaped are of the tree I planted. They tear me and I bleed." He said, "That man Stanberry has slandered me through the columns of a newspaper, and refused even to answer a polite note, and I chastized him as I would a dog, and I will visit the same punishment on the shoulders of anyone who insults me, even though it be one of you who now sit in judgment on my conduct." When the thunder of applause that greeted this remark had ceased the silence that followed was broken by a voice clear as a flute; it was a woman's voice that could be heard all over the chamber. A reigning belle of Washington had risen from her seat in the gallery just above where Houston stood and said: "I had rather be Sam Houston in a dungeon than Stanberry on a throne," and threw a bouquet of flowers at his feet. He told us that when he stooped down to take the flowers and looking up bowed his thanks to the fair lady he felt a thrill of joy like that he experienced in the flush of victory at San Jacinto.

Four days after his speech the House decided by a vote of 106 to 89 that Houston had been guilty of a breach of privilege. Then, on motion of Henry Clay, a vote was taken on the proposition that Houston should be brought to the bar of the House and there reprimanded by the Speaker for contempt. Henry Clay opposed any penalty except that of a reprimand: the motion was adopted by a vote of 106 to 89. Then a motion to exclude Houston from the privileges of the House was lost by a vote of 90 yeas to 101 nays: Clay, Broadhead, Cave Johnson and James K. Polk voting in the negative.

The curious reader will find in Volume XII of the *Abridgment of Debates* the censure of the Speaker which reads more like a compliment than a reproof. Houston was fined by the local authorities \$500 for assault, which was remitted by President Jackson, "for divers good and sufficient reasons moving thereto."

His Duel With General William White.—In his long conversation that night in Bastrop in 1859 Houston told us of his duel with General White and its origin. It occurred soon after his return to Nashville after his first term in Congress. He had denounced a postmaster, who threatened to hold him personally responsible, and it was generally believed by his friends that Jno. T. Smith, a noted duelist, would bear a challenge from the offended party, and that Colonel McGregor, whose grandson now resides in Austin, would act as Houston's friend. Smith lived in Missouri; he had killed six men in duels and was known as Jack Smith T. He bore a challenge from the angry postmaster and attempted to deliver it to McGregor, who, without reading it, tore the paper and threw it on the ground, saying, "I'll neither read nor deliver to Houston anything brought by you, sir." No fight followed between Smith and McGregor, but General White, who was near, remarked that he did not think Smith had been properly treated. When Houston heard of the remark he told General White that if he was not satisfied he would give him any satisfaction he desired. It was reported that White had backed down, and this caused White to resent the imputation by challenging Houston, who accepted it.

Houston went at once to General Jackson's home at the Hermitage to borrow his pistols and practice under his eye. The dueling code required the antagonists to stand with their backs to each other and after answering to the question "Are you ready, gentlemen?" to fire between the words "fire" and "1, 2, 3, stop." Jackson told Houston to clamp some substance firmly between his teeth to steady his nerve, and also to so place his feet that without turning he could make a quarter turn of his body and thus gain a fraction of time after the word "fire." Houston and White fought across the State line in Kentucky. Houston escaped, but White was shot through the body, though not killed.

In answer to a question as to what Houston would have done if insulted by Smith T., he told us that it was then thought in

Nashville that his enemies had brought Smith there to provoke a challenge from him. Smith was a dead-shot who after killing his victim always walked up to him to see if he had shot him in the eye. General Houston told us that it was believed that Smith wore a shirt of mail, and he said that he had prepared himself with a double-edged dagger and if Smith had insulted him by treading on his foot or otherwise, he intended to seize him and kill him by driving the knife down above the collar bone, for, said he, "Smith was a heartless butcher, and if insulted, I intended to slay him as I would a dog."

Houston never fought another duel, though his bitter tongue when speaking of his enemies provoked many challenges. He was challenged by General Albert Sidney Johnston, President Lamar, Commodore Moore, President Burnet, and others. He once handed to his secretary the paper containing a challenge, saying, "This is number twenty-four. The angry gentleman must wait his turn."

It may seem strange that his reputation for courage was not affected, especially when the manner in which he sometimes avoided a fight is considered, for once he said, "Tell him that I won't fight him, for I never fight downhill"; but there was a general feeling amongst the colonists, except on the upper Colorado, that the safety of the republic depended on his services, and that many who aspired to leadership wanted him out of the way; therefore the people did not blame him for refusing to risk his life in personal combats.

Among the most prominent men then in Texas was William H. Wharton who was a brilliant orator and a leading spirit in stirring up the colonists to revolt. Governor Frank Lubbock once told me that after Houston had declined a challenge from Wharton he, with others, was present when they met in the shed room of the house on White Oak Bayou near Houston, where on some festive occasion the gentlemen had retired to mix their toddies. Wharton made an insulting remark to Houston and at the same time placed his hand on the handle of his Bowie knife, when Houston instantly lifted up both his open hands above his own head at arm's length and exclaimed: "Draw—draw if you dare! Lift your hand against the Majesty of Texas and the Almighty God would blast you where you stand." Such was the strange

influence of Houston's voice and gesture that Wharton, whom all knew to be a brave man, left the room.

I witnessed in 1859 the wonderful influence that Houston exercised over a desperate man when both were seated opposite each other at the dining table of Nicholson's Hotel in Bastrop. Ham White had during his early life been a Texas ranger, and had sworn he would kill Houston on sight, because he had said during the "Archive War" after the Mexican invasion of Vasquez that the people of the upper Colorado were horse thieves. White's threat was known, and Houston had been warned. While seated opposite each other at the dining table White made a very insulting remark intended for the General. All heard it and expected trouble; no answer was made, but Houston after laying down his knife and fork straightened up in his chair and looked with defiant gaze straight at Ham White who dropped his head and continued eating. Not a word was spoken, but anyone who has seen a powerful mastiff cow with a look a barking dog can understand the scene.

Strange Renewal of Friendship.—One of my nearest neighbors and valued friends from 1852 to 1860 was Captain James M. Swisher. He commanded a company at San Jacinto, and was a staunch friend of Houston until the latter attempted to remove the archives of the Republic from Austin, and at the same time indulged in harsh criticisms of Austin's colonists on the Colorado. For this Swisher openly threatened to hold Houston responsible. They never met, however, until 1857 when Houston, while making a speech, discovered Swisher in the audience. After a patriotic tribute to the bravery of the Texan soldiers at San Jacinto, the General said: "Yes, I see many of my old boys before me, and yonder sits Captain Jim Swisher, the bravest of the brave." After the speaking Swisher embraced Houston and weeping, laid his head on Houston's breast. Swisher was a good hater, a stern, vindictive man; but the memory of mutual dangers in the past and former friendship drove every thought of resentment from his breast.

Houston's Solicitude for Long John.—In the winter of 1838 when the seat of government was at Houston a few of Houston's Cherokee friends went there to see him, expecting, of course, to get presents of powder, lead and blankets. Houston was poor; indeed his only property consisted of two negroes Tom and Esau,

and his saddle horse. Under such conditions his Indian visitors could not have given the General much pleasure. One cold, rainy night while the Cherokees were in town Dr. Ashbel Smith, Surgeon-General of the army of Texas, received an unexpected visit from Houston, who standing at the door without entering Smith's cabin said: "Dr. Ashbel, have you with you your pill bags?" When he answered "yes" the General said: "Then get them quick and follow me to see a sick friend." He led the way over the muddy streets through the dark and the cold rain until he stopped at the open door of a large cabin built of pine slabs that stood in the rear of the Capitol. At the door Houston removed his hat and stood with bowed head until an Indian medicine man had finished his incantations over a kettle that was placed on a fire on a dirt floor in the middle of the room. Then the General, who had not spoken a word, motioned to the Doctor and pointed to two goods boxes on which Smith saw by the flickering firelight the form of a stalwart Indian. Houston motioned to Smith to approach the man, but still without speaking. The Doctor felt his wrist; he had no pulse. "Your friend, Mr. President, is quite sick," he said. Houston bowed his head, but said nothing. The Doctor put his ear over the region of the heart; it had ceased to beat, and the Indian's glazed eyes were fixed on vacancy. The Doctor wished to break gently the patient's condition to the President, so he said: "Mr. President, your friend is really in *articulo mortis*." Houston bowed his head, but said nothing. "I must be plain. Your friend is dead." The Doctor told me that Houston bowed his head for an instant, and then lifting high his hands exclaimed: "My God, is Long John dead? I thought Long John was too d— a rascal ever to die."

His Dislike for General W. R. Scurry.—General William R. Scurry, who was killed at the battle of the Saline during our Civil War, was one of the eloquent men of Texas. He opposed Houston from the stump in 1859 and incurred his enmity. Scurry, who was often careless in his attire, was nicknamed by Houston "Dirty-Shirt Bill." His hatred of Scurry found expression in a peculiar manner. After the inauguration of General Houston in 1860, A. J. Hamilton and G. W. Paschal, desiring to retain Professor Shumard as State Geologist, introduced him to the Governor who was quite busy, but being introduced Houston laid down his pen

and said: "O yes, glad to see you, Professor. Few men in Texas are qualified for your office. You call rocks the bones of the earth and tell how old it is by inspecting them. Yes, yes, a rare sort of learning! I wish a test of your skill. Find out and report to me the composition of the dirt on Bill Scurry's neck. If the report satisfies me I may keep you." Then rising up, he said: "Good afternoon, Professor, good afternoon," and with a lordly gesture bowed him to the door.

Soon afterwards I met Hamilton coming from the Capitol who told me that he had just inquired about Shumard's appointment, and the Governor had said: "He is a remarkable man, sir. He reports that he has found six distinct strata of filth on Bill Scurry's neck, and in the lower strata next to the hide he has discovered the fossil remains of animalculae."

His Views of Education.—When he brought his young son, Sam Houston, to Allen's Military School at Bastrop, he then gave to the Hon. A. J. Hamilton and myself his views of education. He wanted his son to be well grounded in the history and constitution of the United States, to continue his study of English grammar, and to have daily practice in writing until he could write well; to cypher to the "single rule of three," and learn how to calculate interest so as to protect himself in business, and did not wish him to "waste time" on Greek and Latin, nor keep him at school for years to learn the higher branches of mathematics. "For what profit," he asked, "is there in learning to tell how long it will take a ray of light from some distant star to reach our planet?" He wished to take Sam from school before he was twenty years old and place him in a clerk's office, or store, to come in contact with men and learn the "great book of human nature." He said that if Sam was kept at school until he was older in order to study Greek, Latin, and advanced mathematics he would return home "a graduated fool."

It may well be doubted whether a university education would have better qualified General Houston to lead the rugged men who drifted to the frontier of civilization or to hold his own when surrounded by the turbulent spirits who often opposed him.

His Bird of Destiny.—General Houston once told Dr. Ashbel Smith that a raven, his bird of destiny, fluttered before him in the dust in the road when he was going to Colonel Allen's (his father-

in-law) house the afternoon of his first marriage, and its peculiar cry of distress seemed a note of warning. General Houston gave to Major Goree, who grew up in Texas where the General lived, and to whom he was much attached, a singular account of his coming to Texas. He told him that while he lived among the Cherokees, the raven, whenever he saw that bird, would fly in the direction of Texas, and he at last determined to follow the course of his flight.

His Punishment of an Enemy.—Houston had a great dislike for General Besser, who lived in Huntsville. When Houston was Governor of Texas in 1860 he directed that a lean, half-starved, stray dog that came to the Mansion should not be fed by anyone but himself. After dinner he would throw him some crusts of bread, and then while he was eating would beat him with his staff until he howled, and while beating him would say: "How do you like that, General Besser?" Such an act was evidently the result of his early association with the Indians, who thought they could injure an enemy by giving his name to some object and then shooting arrows at it.

One of His Last Speeches.—When he was Governor in 1860 he spoke one cloudy afternoon in December on the north side of the Baptist church that stands in front of the Executive Mansion. His voice was clear and strong, and as he appealed for the union of the States, he uttered no word of bitter invective. His entire speech was an address to the reason, while he was depicting the horrors of civil war and foretelling its progress and result with prophetic truth; not one word of dissent was heard from the great assembly that covered the hillside. I have sought in vain for a newspaper copy of that speech to which I listened, but much of it lingers in my memory. He warned us that civil war would surely follow secession, and would result in the destruction of slavery; he said that at first Southern chivalry would for a time triumph, but our overthrow would follow; that the prejudices of the civilized world were against slavery and would prevent help from coming to us from abroad, while Europe would, if necessary, furnish recruits for the armies of the North. He warned the people of the numerical superiority of the Northern States, and that they were in possession of the navy and all the machinery of organized government, while the South with no previous preparation would soon find its

seacoast blockaded and its men fighting with the fear of a servile insurrection behind them. He predicted that our young men would be hurried across the Mississippi River,¹ and leave Texas to be protected by old men and boys, and thus fall an easy victim to the North. He said the North would control the Mississippi River and cut the Confederacy in two; New Orleans would be captured, and our boys would die on distant fields. Thus with warning voice he pleaded for peace, and talked like some inspired prophet of disaster. No one answered him, and though Associate Justice Roberts and Attorney-General George Flournoy soon afterwards made able speeches for secession, yet at the election a large majority of votes cast in Travis county and Austin were against secession, and it was defeated in every one of the five counties of my judicial district.

His stern and uncompromising nature provoked antagonism at every stage of his strange career. As early as 1855, while he was a United States senator from Texas, the Texas house of representatives passed "A resolution inviting him 'as former president of the Republic of Texas' to a seat in that House," but it declared that the invitation "should not be construed as an endorsement of his vote on the Kansas-Nebraska bill to which this House is opposed."

In 1859 he made no concessions to the secession element and made but few speeches, and yet though he denounced secession as madness he was elected by 6,000 votes in a voting population of 63,727. Two years before that he had been defeated by the organized Democracy by a majority of 8,924 votes, on account of his position in opposing the extension of slavery. His majority in 1859, if it had not been overawed by the defiant and aggressive methods of the intellectual men who then had the confidence of the people, might have prevented the secession of Texas.

Lincoln's Letter.—Before the secession convention removed Houston from his office,² he received a letter from Mr. Lincoln

¹This danger was soon realized. On the 12th of March, 1862, I delivered to Judah P. Benjamin, the Secretary of War of the Confederate States, the protest of the Texas Governor against raising any troops except through the Governor's office; a promise to comply with the request was made, but disregarded.

²Governor Houston was deposed on March 16.—THE EDITORS.

through a confidential messenger about the 28th of March, 1861, in which he was told that Lincoln was willing to send 50,000 troops to aid in keeping Texas in the Union. Undoubtedly the effort already made by Governor Houston to induce General Twiggs to surrender to *him* instead of to the Convention the government arms and stores in San Antonio was known in Washington and induced Lincoln's letter. When that letter was received, Houston requested his personal friends David Culberson, James Throckmorton, Ben Epperson and his cousin, Colonel Rogers (who was afterwards killed at Corinth), to meet him in the Executive Mansion. He there in confidence showed them Lincoln's letter and asked them to express frankly their opinions. Though all were at that time opposed to secession, they each advised against resistance to the Convention. Then Houston stepped to the fire and burned the letter, saying: "Gentlemen, I had resolved to act in this matter on your advice, but if I was ten years younger I would not."¹

If he ever contemplated resistance to the Secession Convention, the idea was abandoned for he wrote to Colonel Waite at San Antonio, saying: "I have received intelligence that you have, *or will soon receive* orders to concentrate United States troops under your command at Indianola, in this State, to sustain me in the exercise of my official functions. Allow me most respectfully to decline any such assistance . . . and to most earnestly protest against the concentration of troops . . . in Texas and to request that you remove all such troops out of this State."

No Relic in the Texas Capitol.—Texas has no relic as a personal memento of her most illustrious soldier and statesman; neither vesture, hat, sword, gun, nor even his walking staff.² A long gold-

¹The above account of what transpired I had in great confidence from one of the gentlemen consulted. Senator Culberson has referred to it in an article published some years ago (*Scribner's Magazine*, May, 1906, p. 556), and he learned it, presumably, from his father. A letter printed in the *War of the Rebellion* (Series I, Vol. 1, pp. 551-552) gives an insight into a confidential mission of one F. W. Lander, sent by Mr. Lincoln. It may be that he bore the letter referred to, but my information was that the bearer of the letter from Mr. Lincoln was George Giddings.

²While the articles enumerated by Judge Terrell have not been placed in the Capitol, the reader may find there a marble bust, a marble statue, four oil portraits, and the official records of General Houston's administrations as President and as Governor of Texas.—THE EDITORS.

headed staff with which he walked habitually in his advanced years was presented to me by his son, Senator Temple Houston, many years ago to keep as a memorial of the General's personal regard. It was delivered to me with the request that it should finally go to the most worthy descendant of the General. After it had remained in my hall for many years, Temple Houston wrote me from Oklahoma requesting that I send it to him. I reminded him that the State had none of his father's belongings, and wrote requesting consent that I might chain it to his father's portrait in the Capitol. He answered saying: "Send me the staff. Texas thinks more of Jim Hogg's old shoes than of my father's memory." I thought it a harsh reflection on the State, but within a year his sister, an intellectual and accomplished lady, was defeated for the office of postmistress of the Senate.

Houston's inflexible honesty and contempt for the mere money-maker did much to inspire the confidence of the early colonists. He opposed all speculative raids on the public domain, and once proclaimed that he had rather see our treasure emptied into the Colorado River than give it to any sort of corporation.

A Duty of Texas.—To General Sam Houston, more than to any man living or dead, Texas owed her independence, and to his wise statesmanship her preservation against foreign and domestic enemies during the ten years when she was a republic. The prejudice excited by Texas slave holders against him on account of his opposition to the extension of slavery, and which has been transmitted to many of their posterity, is unworthy of our people.

Too long has this State neglected his memory; for not until he had been dead forty-seven years did she do anything to show her gratitude, and then it was done as an act of tardy justice by erecting a monument over his remains in an obscure graveyard in the interior of the State.¹

We are now strong and prosperous, and this State should place in front of our Capitol his full length bronze statue of heroic size, on a granite pedestal, with no inscription but his name, SAM HOUSTON.

¹For a brief notice of the unveiling of this monument, see *THE QUARTERLY*, XV, 85.